

News from Rep. Stephanie Herseth

For Immediate Release

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BILL INCLUDES FUNDING FOR ELLSWORTH, SOUTH DAKOTA AIR NATIONAL GUARD, VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Military Quality of Life – Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill Funds South Dakota Bases and Makes Up for Shortfall in Veterans Health Care

November 18, 2005, Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth announced that the Military Quality of Life – Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill conference report includes key funding for Ellsworth Air Force Base and the South Dakota Air National Guard at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls. The bill also includes critical funding for veterans' health care.

The conference report outlines \$8.4 million for a Maintenance Group Headquarters Facility at Ellsworth Air Force Base, as well as \$14.4 million for 60 family housing units there. The bill also includes \$5.5 million for a facility and communications upgrade at Joe Foss Field, which was a specific Herseth request secured in the House version of the bill this year. Herseth supported the bill earlier today, as it easily passed the House and now heads to the President for his signature.

Herseth said, "This funding is an investment in the future of our military bases in South Dakota. As we know, it is vital to do all we can to strengthen the missions at these bases, and ensure that they remain where they are for generations to come."

Herseth has also been working to help Ellsworth land a Financial Services Center, which would add hundreds of jobs and further increase the base's value to our military.

Additionally, the conference report contains \$1.2 billion to fix a shortfall in veterans' health care for FY 2006. Herseth supports mandatory funding for veterans' health care to avoid shortfalls

such as this. Herseth said, “It’s a shame that we consistently underfund health care for our nation’s heroes. I hope that some in Washington learn a valuable lesson from this shameful episode.”

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Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth serves South Dakota in the U.S. House of Representatives . She is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of moderate Democrats committed to fiscal discipline and strong national security, and is co-chair of the Rural Working Group, which is dedicated to raising the profile of issues important to rural America. She also serves on three committees vital to South Dakota’s interests. Agriculture, Veterans’ Affairs and Resources.